

**MINUTES OF USUCGER BOARD MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL
MARCH 4, 2008**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Anand Puppala-President, Ali Maher-President Elect, Jim Hanson-Treasurer, Chris Baxter-Secretary, Susan Burns, Russell Green, and Marte Gutierrez

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: John Bowders, Steve Dickenson

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Matt Evans-Webmaster

MEETING COMMENCED AT 3:00 P.M. EST.

1. Welcome to New Members
2. USUCGER Workshop Updates - Venue Details (Anand); Research Session (Russell and Ali); Education and Mentoring Sessions (Anand)
3. Workshop Proposal to NSF - Update (Jim)
4. Workshop Budget - Jim and Anand
5. Web Issues (Matt)
6. Practical Journal - Dr. Briaud

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

President Anand Puppala welcomed new members Chris Baxter, John Bowders, and Marte Gutierrez to the Board.

2. 2008 USUCGER WORKSHOP

President Anand Puppala reported on general details regarding the 2008 USUCGER Workshop that will be held during the Geotechnical Earthquake Engineering and Soil Dynamics IV (GEESD IV) conference in Sacramento, CA on May 18-22. A room has been booked for the workshop at the conference hotel, the cost of which will be covered by ASCE. A projector can be provided by Jim Hanson, however a screen will need to be obtained.

Russell Green reported on the organization of the research session. The main speakers will be Carlos Santamarina (Georgia Tech and a contributor to the recent National Research Council Report) and Lew Semprini (OSU, background in nano/bio). Other confirmed speakers include Rick Fragaszy (National Science Foundation), Annie Kammerer (Nuclear Regulatory Commission), and Rich Anderson (Practitioner (SME) and ABET). Speakers not confirmed yet include Jorge Martinez (Practitioner, Bechtel Infrastructure Corp.), and a representative from FHWA. Jim Mitchell (VT, and another contributor to the National Research Council Report) said he may be able to participate depending on his travel schedule. The tentative format for the workshop is that the main speakers (Lew Semprini and Carlos Santamarina) will each present for 30 minutes, with

the other speakers giving shorter talks (10 to 15 minutes each). All speakers would then participate on a panel discussion.

President Anand Puppala reported on the organization of the Education and Mentoring Sessions. The education session will involve one invited speaker and four to five breakout groups. The mentoring session will include talks by Tom Zimmie (RPI), Barbara Luke (UNLV), and Ray Sandeford.

3. WORKSHOP PROPOSAL TO NSF

Treasurer Jim Hanson gave an update on the workshop proposal to NSF. A draft proposal was submitted in February. It received positive feedback from Richard Fragaszy at NSF, however its approval is still pending.

4. WORKSHOP BUDGET

Treasurer Jim Hanson and President Anand Puppala gave an update on the workshop budget and approximate numbers of participants. The approximate budget for the workshop is \$35,700 and includes \$24,000 in participant support. There are currently 20-24 people who plan to attend the workshop in addition to the Board members.

5. WEB ISSUES

Web Master Matt Evans reported on issues relating to the website. Following the posting of Dr. Ralph Peck's obituary on the USUCGER website in February, it was agreed that other obituaries of prominent members would also be collected and posted.

Matt will begin collecting statistics about the website regarding which pages are most often visited by the public. A "Geo-Wikipedia" is also being set up, in which people can be registered as users and upload information related to geotechnical engineering.

6. PRACTICAL JOURNAL

Dr. Jean-Louis Briaud asked the Board to discuss and comment on the proposed formation of a Geo-Institute GI Journal of Geoengineering Practice (GIP). In principle, most of the Board members welcomed the idea of initiating this new journal. However, a few concerns were raised during the discussion. These included: quality of reviews (e.g., "Will it become a diluted journal?"); quality of field data and permission issues (e.g., will firms/owners allow project data to be published). There was a concern that few practitioners have the time, incentive, or willingness to write journal papers. As a result, it was suggested that conducting a survey of sorts to get a better handle on current obstacles preventing practitioners from writing journal papers might be helpful. Also, there was a question about how would the new journal be different from existing journals that cater to more practice oriented papers (e.g., Ground Improvement Journal, International Journal of Geoengineering Case Histories, etc.)? Finally, the Board had additional questions related to the specifics of the Journal (e.g., how many times it will be published, will the paper review process be similar to other ASCE journals...).

In summary, the Board was supportive of the effort of the idea behind initiating this new journal, but encourages additional background study to see if such a journal is needed and

therefore whether it will be successful. This information was passed on to Dr. Briaud by President Puppala on March 5, 2008.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:55 P.M. EST